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RR RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #0316 0821657
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 231657Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1126
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1316
RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0285

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 000316

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KINSHASA PASS TO BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: IVOIRIAN WORKERS, PARTY
MAKES ITSELF HEARD

REF: A. ABIDJAN 261

[1](#)B. ABIDJAN 228

Classified By: POL/ECON Jim Wojtasiewicz, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) On March 20, PIT (the Ivoirian Workers, Party) suspended its participation in the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), to protest the fact that the highest-ranking position it was given on the IEC's Executive Board was Deputy Treasurer. In the previous IEC, PIT held the position of Treasurer. PIT is upset both about the demotion itself and the fact that it was not consulted about it. In contrast, Prime Minister Banny and UN High Representative for Elections Monteiro held extensive consultations with other parties in the IEC to break the protracted deadlock over the composition of the Board, and in the end a new fourth Vice President position was created to mollify President Gbagbo's FPI (Ivoirian Popular Front) party (ref A). PIT and FPI are erstwhile allies, and they both boycotted the October election of the IEC Board. PIT thus saw itself brushed aside while the FPI was courted and rewarded for the same behavior. To add insult to injury, the position of Treasurer went to the rebel New Forces, who also were given one of the four Vice President positions.

[1](#)2. (C) PIT leader Francis Wodie has also made known his unhappiness at not being included in the February 28 summit of Ivoirian political leaders (ref B), which was attended by President Gbagbo and the heads of the three principal opposition parties.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Established in 1990, PIT is one of Cote d'Ivoire's oldest political parties, but it remains very small. PIT won only four of the 225 seats in the National Assembly in the 2000 legislative elections, and two of their deputies later defected to FPI. PIT and FPI both started out as socialist parties, but the FPI shifted to a more populist, less ideological orientation, while PIT has kept its image as a party of left-wing intellectuals. PIT operates largely in the shadow of FPI and it often mirrors FPI's actions, but it continues to insist on an independent political identity. Relations between PIT leader Wodie and President Gbagbo are not warm.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment. It is not hard to see the reasoning behind PIT's public fit of pique. With its small size and the similarity of its platform to that of FPI, the party is afraid of getting lost in the pre-election jockeying for position. Wodie ran in the last two presidential elections and he may well be considering another bid.

[1](#)5. (C) PIT's withdrawal will not prevent the CEI from functioning, but it will undermine the Board's pledge to

operate by consensus. Small as it is, PIT is still one of the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis agreement, and Wodie has been a central figure in Cote d'Ivoire's political and judicial development. We would not be surprised to see Prime Minister Banny or CEI President Beugre reach out to Wodie to try to bring him back on board. The olive branch is less likely to come from President Gbagbo. For Wodie's part, he has few other chips to play, and now that he has made his point he has little to gain from staying out in the political wilderness. In any case, the composition of the Board will not be renegotiated, and the most Wodie can hope to get is some gesture of respect for his political stature. End Comment.

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